

constituents, Mike Connor, who started with one restaurant in 1992 and now has a chain of 15 restaurants.

He wrote this letter to me recently. He said, quote, "We, the middle-sized business owners, are going to need a lot of help in the next couple of years. As I understand the current health care reform bill, Connor Concepts, as an employer of more than 50 people, will be required to provide health insurance for all full-time employees or face a \$3,000 fine per employee."

"We currently employ around 1,200 team members in five States. We do provide health insurance for around 100 full-time salaried management and upper-management staff. Of the remaining 1,100 team members, around 800 are full-time and are not provided with health insurance."

"If we are required to pay for their health insurance or pay the penalty, we would have to pay an additional \$2,400,000. If we are forced to pay this, the five States we operate in will have an additional 1,200 unemployed. We would lose a lot of money!"

Mr. Connor continues, "Together with my team, I have built this company from one restaurant in 1992, providing jobs for 80 people, to 15 restaurants, employing 1,200. Right now we plan to continue opening one restaurant a year, employing 80 to 100 people. If something doesn't change in the next year or 2 with this reform, we will have to stop growth."

I want to repeat what he said here. This 15-restaurant chain, which is not a giant business, they will have to stop their growth if the health care reform bill goes fully into effect as it is now written.

Mr. Connor continues, "Though our team members are not provided health insurance because of the expense, they are provided with a good pay wage, excellent vacation benefits, meal privileges, and excellent working conditions. More than anything else, though, they are provided a good job, one that allows them to pay their bills, support their families, or pay for their school."

"We do provide an insurance plan team members can pay for themselves. It is an inexpensive plan that has limits on hospital stays but does take care of routine medical care."

Mr. Connor ends this letter by saying, "I look forward to working with you in whatever way I can to change this law so that I can stay in business."

Businesses, Mr. Speaker, all over this country are facing this same situation. And we have got to change this and allow the free-enterprise, free-market system to work in this country once again if we're going to ever have the recovery that our people want.

I thank you.

TRIBUTE TO BILL HANDLEMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, award-winning journalist Bill Handleman, 62, of the Asbury Park Press, tragically passed away yesterday after a long bout with cancer.

A family man and a humanitarian with a great big heart and incisive wit, Bill is survived by his dear wife Judy, his three children, his mom, extended family, and a boatload of friends.

And allow me to extend our deepest condolences to the family and to let them know that our prayers are with them during this very, very difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, to know Bill Handleman in person or through his prolific pen is to respect and admire his innate goodness, his generosity, and good humor. For years, Bill's news beat was sports, and he especially liked the ponies. He was a four-time sportswriter of the year, in 1992, 2002, 2003, and 2005.

Asbury Park Press staff writer Shannon Mullen writes in today's edition, however, that "Bill soon discovered that he much preferred writing about everyday struggles of ordinary people rather than the coddled multimillionaire athletes he dealt with on the sports beat."

Bill had an extraordinary penchant for a compelling subject matter and consistently turned the seemingly mundane, especially those who were left out and left behind, into compelling human interest stories.

The Press's Shannon Mullen again summed it up well: "Bill Handleman was a gifted storyteller. His writing style was direct, witty, and spare. A lifelong student of Hemingway, he used periods like an Impressionist painter uses a brush, preferring short, incisive sentences that packed a punch. And as a columnist, Handleman relished championing the underdog." Mr. Speaker, thank God he did.

Even as he battled cancer, Bill turned out one great story after another with intriguing titles like, "A Man With a Hole in His Heart: A Coach's Story"; "No Longer Homeless: A Former Mogul Envisions the Future"; "A Different Midlife Crisis: A Man Learns that He Is Adopted"; "During the Depression, the Poor Scramble for Work and Cash"; "A Father Leaves Behind a Secret"—it was a World War II veteran story.

His stories made us laugh and touched our hearts, and they moved us to action, like the case of David Goldman. To a large extent, David Goldman ceased being invisible in his heroic battle to reclaim his son, Sean, from a child abductor in Brazil because Bill Handleman made it his passion to effectively inform, inspire, and challenge the community, including and especially lawmakers, to join David's struggle for justice.

"For 4 years, no one could hear him. He was shouting in the dark," David's father, Barry, told Mr. Handleman in one column. In the 16 months since Mr.

Handleman began telling this story, David's seemingly intractable plight went from near total obscurity to huge prominence. Public officials at every level responded to the call.

Each of Bill Handleman's approximately 24 columns not only conveyed to readers timely and critically important information about the Goldman case, but Mr. Handleman went deep behind the scenes to flesh out details of uncommon courage, sacrifice and compassion. Bill Handleman gave the community rare insights into the raw emotion and the fleeting successes, followed by frustrating setbacks, the agony and ultimately the ecstasy of David and Sean's permanent reunion.

In a candor and depth of reporting found nowhere else in the print media, we got to know David in his own words as he was thinking it. Readers of the column were there with David on countless trips to Rio, to Brasilia, to Washington, and at home with him in Monmouth County. For more than a year, Bill Handleman allowed us to see it all as David did and to walk, to some extent, in left-behind-parents' shoes. Through Bill Handleman's incisive pen, we also got to know much of David Goldman's family and close friends.

We will miss Bill Handleman. I, along with tens and thousands of others, read each and every column, often with tears and empathy and resolve to do more about David Goldman's case. David Goldman was, indeed, lucky that the columnist who embraced his quest turned out to be a consummate storyteller and the Handleman column a true game-changer. Bill Handleman did an exceptional job. We will miss him dearly.

Again, our prayers and our condolences go out to Judy and to the family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.